Introduction

As a European Union (EU) citizen you have a number of important rights. For example, you have the right to move and reside freely within the EU. You also have the right to vote and stand as a candidate in European and municipal elections in another EU country where you reside, under the same conditions as nationals of that country. You furthermore have the right not to be discriminated against on grounds of nationality.

The European Commission is working to safeguard and strengthen your rights. In 2013, the Commission issued a EU Citizenship Report, listing 12 actions designed to help citizens enjoy their EU rights in six key areas: removing obstacles for workers, students and trainees in the EU; cutting red tape in the Member States; protecting the more vulnerable members of society; eliminating barriers to shopping in the EU; providing targeted and accessible information on EU rights and enhancing participation in the democratic life of the EU.

This consultation gives you the opportunity to share your opinion and your experience on matters relating to your rights as an EU citizen as well as on what more the European Commission could do to make your life easier when you exercise your EU rights.

Your views are important. Please tell us what you think.

General profile

Note: The approach is two-fold: some questions are meant to draw on your experiences, whereas other questions seek your views on ways in which your EU rights could be reinforced. Given their nature, the questions are primarily addressed to individuals, e.g. referring to the experiences of the respondents. Other participants, for example civil society organisations, may also reply to these questions on the basis of the common experiences of their members. Only a few questions are mandatory and they are marked with an asterisk (*).

If you are answering this consultation on behalf of an organisation, please note that in the interests of transparency, organisations (including, for example, NGOs, trade associations and commercial enterprises) are invited to provide the public with relevant information about themselves by registering in the Transparency Register and subscribing to its Code of Conduct. If you are a registered organisation, you will...
be asked to indicate the name of your organisation and your register number ID in the questionnaire. Your contribution will then be considered as representing the views of your organisation.

If your organisation is not registered, you have the opportunity to register now. You can then return to this page to submit your contribution as a registered organisation.

Responses from organisations that are not registered will be published as part of the individual contributions.

Please read the Specific Privacy Statement on how we deal with your personal data and contribution.

* In what capacity are you completing this questionnaire?

- Individual/private person
- Civil society organisation
- Business
- Academic/research institution
- Other

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The name of your organisation and your register number ID:

1,500 character(s) maximum

European Disability Forum
57868523887-16

* Your reply:

  - can be directly published with your personal information (I consent to publication of any information in my contribution in whole or in part including, where applicable, my name/the name of my organisation, and I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication).
can be directly published provided that you/your organisation remain(s) anonymous (I consent to publication of any information in my contribution in whole or in part (which may include quotes or opinions I express) provided that this is done anonymously. I declare that nothing within my response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication).

- cannot be directly published but may be included in statistical data - (I understand that my contribution will not be directly published, but that my anonymised responses may be included in published statistical data, for example to show general trends in the response to this consultation).

A) INTRA-EU MOBILITY

1) Your experience of travelling within the EU

Have you ever travelled to an country other than the one of which you are a national "another country"?

- Yes
- No

or what purpose? (multiple replies possible)

- On holiday
- For work-related reasons
- School/studying
- Training
- Volunteering
- To go shopping
- Visiting family and friends
- Medical treatment
- Sport or cultural events
- Other

Please specify

1,500 character(s) maximum

As European organisation of persons with disabilities EDF holds several meetings per year bringing together numerous persons with disabilities from across the EU. Due to limited or to lack of accessibility of transport, hotels, and meeting venues, our choice is very limited and the costs encountered are high. Only expensive hotels have sufficient number of accessible rooms. Lack of accessible local transport in some cases obliges us to stay closer to the airport o
How often do you travel to other countries?

- Less than once per year
- 1-5 times per year
- 6-10 times per year
- More than 10 times per year
- Regularly (commuter)

2) Your experience of residing in another EU country

- Have you ever resided in another country or more than three months?
  - Yes
  - No

  - **or what purpose? multiple replies possible**
    - a. Work
    - Taking up a new job
    - Moving within an existing job (e.g. your employer seconded you)
    - Taking up a paid training apprenticeship offer
    - Starting a business working as a self-employed person
    - Commuting between workplaces workplace and place where you reside
    - Looking for a job
    - b. Education and volunteering
    - Attending secondary school
    - Attending university
Participating in a study exchange programme

Providing training

Taking up an unpaid training apprenticeship offer

Volunteering

Learning a language

c. Family reasons: to join or accompany one or more of the following:

d. Other

What information did you see to obtain more deciding whether to move to another country? (multiple replies possible)

a. Information on administrative requirements and procedures (for yourself and/or family members) on

- Residence documents
- Finding a job
- Employment and work conditions
- Registering as self-employed
- Studying abroad
- Recognition of academic diplomas
- Recognition of professional qualifications
- School enrolment and more generally the education system
- Moving as a retiree
- Moving as a non-active person
- Social security and welfare
- Visas
- Taxation

- Accessibility for people with disabilities or reduced mobility
- Other

Comments, if any e.g. priorities, relevance of information

1,500 character(s) maximum

Information on accessibility for persons with disabilities is often difficult to find and, in case of inaccessible websites, to obtain. While YourEurope and the Commission website have information on social security coordination and rights to benefits, there is no dedicated service or space where citizens can che
Check an overview of accessibility information e.g. for transport or on how to get accessible housing. Every member state has their own websites or services which usually don’t have all the EU languages and which operate in different ways.

- b. Information on family-related matters
- c. Information on rights to vote and stand as a candidate in
- d. Information on requirements and procedures for acquiring nationality
- e. Other

What sources did you use to obtain the above information?

- Web portals, information and assistance services of public authorities of the host EU country (national / regional / local)
- Web portals, information and assistance services of EU institutions
- Chambers of commerce
- Unofficial/commercial/private websites
- Personal contacts (e.g. family, friends)
- Books
- Social media (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter)
- Expatriate organisations or communities of your compatriots
- Advisors at universities/schools
- Other

Please indicate which of the following internet sites/services of the European Union or supported by the European Union you have used:

- Your Europe portal
- EUROPA European Commission website
- Europe Direct
- EURES
- SOLVIT
- European e-Justice Portal
- Enterprise Europe Network
- EU representation in your country
- ENIC-NARIC portal (National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union)
Other

Having moved to another country did you encounter any difficulties in your day to day life with regard to the exercise of your rights as an citizen?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever been discriminated against by the administration public authorities or public service providers in another country because of your nationality?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever faced problems when returning to your country because you had resided in another country?

- Yes
- No

3) Your views on free movement of citizens within the EU

Do you think moving to another country (multiple replies possible)

- brings cultural diversity
- brings specific knowledgeskills
- helps create an EU identity
- fosters mutual understanding
- creates economic growth (e.g. makes companies more competitive, offers better services)
- creates problems
- Other

Comments, if any (e.g. on priorities or weighting of the statements)

1,500 character(s) maximum

The EDF considers that democratic citizenship should be addressed from a non discrimination and gender equality perspective, conceived as a lifetime process envisaged from the perspective of ensuring full and facto non discrimination and equality between women and men as enshrined in the EU treaty and different national and international commitments. It should not be merely a narrow individual mobility rights-based approach. In relation to the right to free movement of persons, Freedom of movement of persons is a fundamental freedom that a
4) Your views on facilitating residence in another EU country

If you were planning to move to another country which of the following measures would most help you to prepare your move? (multiple replies possible)

- Online information on practical issues in the country of destination (how to register as resident, register in electoral rolls, set up a business, take up a job, have your qualifications recognised, enrol your children at school, register your car, retire, etc.)
- The possibility for the authorities of your home country to directly cooperate on administrative formalities with the authorities of the other EU country at your request (provided that the applicable data protection rules are complied with)
- E-services on administrative formalities (with possibility to fill out administrative forms online)
- Other

Please specify

1,500 character(s) maximum

Help and information centre to obtain information via phone, chat and text message or other alternative means of communication (e.g. skype).

If you were living in another country which of the following measures would most help you settle down? (multiple replies possible)

- Information and assistance responding to your needs and questions as a newcomer (how to register as resident, register in electoral rolls, set up a business, take up a job, have your qualifications recognised, enrol your children at school, register your car, retire, disability status etc.) provided by the authorities through one-stop-shop web portals
- The possibility to obtain effective support and assistance in the enforcement of your rights through specialised bodies, where applicable (such as those promoting equal treatment and giving support to EU workers and members of their family, see Directive 2014/54/EU)
- Policies to support employment and entrepreneurship
- Policies related to disability status entitlements
- Active diversity management policies in private companies
Policies to facilitate and promote your political and civic participation

Policies to promote inter-cultural dialogue, mutual understanding and inclusion in society, including at schools

Other

Please specify

1,500 character(s) maximum

Full accessibility is an essential step towards Freedom of movement. There is a need for ensuring that transport, information and communication, the built environment and services are accessible, as otherwise people with disabilities will face obstacles to take up a job, to exercise the right to maternity, to study or to simply go on holiday abroad.

There is a need to combat negative stereotypes linked to gender and disability. However, awareness raising and training is needed, beginning at early childhood and through all stages in life, including university studies and at all levels in society.

Recognition of legal capacity and supported decision making, deinstitutionalisation and access to community based services are prerequisite to enjoyment of freedom of movement.

Member States should allow for the portability of disability benefits and to enhance cooperation in relation to social security policies. Moreover, unless persons who need a personal assistant, sign language interpreter or support person can mobilize this support when travelling abroad, Freedom of movement remains an illusion for those that make use of this support.

Whenever the principle of subsidiarity prevents policy making in this area, at the European level, Member States need to work on policy harmonization through the benchmarking of good practices.

EDF believes that there is a need to establish common and legally binding accessibility requirements and standards in all EU countries.

5) Your experience with mobility of skills and cross-border teaching

Erasmus, the new 2014-2020 EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, is based on the premise that investing in these fields is key to unlocking citizens potential, regardless of age or background. Erasmus finances activities and projects on mobility of individuals for learning purposes (not only students but also other young people, teachers, trainers, lecturers and youth workers), on innovation and exchange of good practices and on support for policy reform.

Have you applied for a grant from the Erasmus programme?

- Yes
- No
Do not know about this programme

Please specify

1,500 character(s) maximum

The EU student exchanges programmes, such as Erasmus+ have improved in recent years by including financial support for students with disabilities. In practice, many barriers to accessing national education systems remain. The EU should evaluate access to inclusive education, including access to European exchange programmes by persons with disabilities. Barriers and good practices should be identified in close cooperation with Member States, students’ organisations and organisations of persons with disabilities. The European Commission should fund research on accessible pedagogical material, the use of ICT in the classroom and reasonable accommodation in education, paying special attention to children in need of high-level support.

Are you aware of existing mechanisms that foster school collaboration across Europe and teachers’ professional development such as the Twinning platform or the School Education Gateway?

- Yes
- No

Do you find it useful?

- Yes
- No

Comments, if any

1,500 character(s) maximum

School collaboration and teachers’ professional development should include positive examples of inclusive education practices and information about the specific perspective of pupils with disabilities. The Commission should set aside additional funding to further those good practices of inclusive education. When setting up online platforms attention should be paid to the accessibility of those tools (following the international standard WCAG 2.0) so that all pupils can participate.

Have you used the website Openducation.europa.eu to see out opportunities or online learning?

- Yes
- No
Do you know about this webpage?

Yes
No

Do you think it useful?

Comments, if any

1,500 character(s) maximum

Online training should include disability perspective in all types of curricula. Not just health, social and human sciences course but also engineering, architecture, communications, informatics should mainstream accessibility and disability among the subjects studied. Trainings on the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities should be developed. When setting up online platforms and e-learning tools, attention should be paid to the accessibility of those tools (following the international standard WCAG 2.0) so that all pupils can participate.

Your views on ways to foster mobility for skills and cross-border teaching

Young people are increasingly undertaking short- or long-term study periods, traineeships or volunteering in another EU country during their studies or at the beginning of their professional career.

Do you think that such cross-border experience (multiple replies possible)

- increases the potential of young people and boosts their career prospects
- helps in fostering an EU identity
- fosters mutual understanding including tolerance and respect for diversity
- does not provide any particular benefit
- Other

Comments, if any

1,500 character(s) maximum

Do you think that such cross-border experience should play a greater role in national education and training programmes?

Yes
No
Please indicate which of the following would be helpful in your view to young people looking for opportunities beyond employment? (multiple replies possible)

- A platform hosting cross-border placements or offers for apprentices and trainees
- Possibility to receive advice/find a mentor to help them
- Possibility to obtain advice from their peers on specific issues, programmes, experiences
- Other

Do you think that it would encourage learners if teachers were helped to share good practices with their peers across borders and receive appropriate resources in this context?

- Teachers were helped to share good practices with their peers across borders and receive appropriate resources in this context
- Teachers from other EU countries were invited to teach at their institutions (e.g. schools)
- Learners could receive lectures from invited staff of companies from other EU countries (e.g. specialists from the corporate world)

7) Your experience of problems faced by certain groups of EU citizens when travelling to another EU country

Have you or other citizens you now experienced problems when travelling to another country based on

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Gender

What were the specific problems experienced

1,500 character(s) maximum

There are specific obstacles that prevent women with disabilities from using their right to free movement. Persons with disabilities do not enjoy barrier-free access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including ICT and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public such as health services, both in urban and in rural areas. However, article 9 on accessibility of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises that appropriate measures must be taken. Persons with disabilities face barriers when studying, looking for a job, travelling, purchasing goods and services or simply accessing information. They also face barriers at different support services for victims of violence that are not accessible for girls and women with disabilities or...
8) Your views on facilitating transport for certain groups of EU citizens when travelling to another EU country

**What could be done to make transport and travelling in the EU easier or citizens with reduced mobility or people with disabilities?** Multiple replies possible. Please include ranking from 1 (being the statement you most agree with) to 9 (being the one you least agree with).

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<td>Accessible transport infrastructure such as airports, ports, train stations or bus terminals and vehicles (planes, ships, trains and coaches)</td>
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<td>Assistance at the transport infrastructure premises and on-board during travel</td>
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<td>Better information on ticketing, availability of tickets and special fares</td>
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<td>Better information on passenger rights, particularly for people with disabilities or reduced mobility</td>
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<td>Recognition of disability status to obtain the same benefits as nationals with disabilities</td>
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1,500 character(s) maximum

Persons with disabilities can make use of EU legislation on the liability of carriers of the different transport modes in cases of loss and/or damage of mobility equipment. However, with air travel the liability is limited by the Montreux Convention to €1,220 (€1,000 Special Drawing Rights) no matter the value of the mobility equipment or the nature of the damage. This limit does not apply in rail and road travel, which is a good example and this should be extended to air travel.

Equal access to any mode of transport cannot be guaranteed unless personal assistants are covered at no additional cost when travelling, as is the case in the Rail Passengers' Rights Regulation (1371/2006) and Regulation 1177/2010 and should be extended to air travel.

Stricter enforcement of passengers’ rights legislation, better implementation and quality control of the assistance offered at airports and stations are needed. The NEBs should be a single contact point to get accessible information about passengers’ rights as well as to lodge a complaint directly in an accessible way. NEBs should raise awareness about this possibility for passengers and it should be verified whether transport undertakings treat complaints with sufficient importance.

Infringement procedures by the Commission are a useful tool for monitoring the implementation of accessibility requirements in EU legislation. This tool could be used more and it could be complemented by a mechanism for individual complaints.

Comments, if any

1,500 character(s) maximum

Inaccessibility of transport prevents independent access and spontaneous travel. Inaccessible bus terminals are an obstacle for persons with disabilities to receive assistance according to Regulation 181/2011 on the rights of bus and coach passengers. The Regulation obliges Member States to notify the Commission of a list of accessible bus terminals. Some Member States do not mention any accessible bus terminal. In contrast, some Member States list bus stations as ‘accessible’ where this is unlikely to be the case in practice.

Furthermore, persons with disabilities should not have to pre-notify to get assistance when traveling by train. The 48-hour notification period under Regulation 1371/2006 should be reduced to make spontaneous travel a reality and assistance should be available at all times when trains are operating and not only at limited times during the day.
B) VALUES OF EU CITIZENSHIP, DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

1) Your experience of participation in elections in the EU

EU citizenship gives every EU citizen the right to vote for and stand as a candidate in municipal and European Parliament elections in whichever EU country he or she resides, under the same conditions as nationals.

Have you exercised your right to vote in European Parliament elections?

In your own country
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

In another EU country
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Have you resided or are currently residing in another country have you voted or stood as candidate

At municipal elections in your host EU country
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

At national or regional elections in your host EU country
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

At national or regional elections in your home country
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Have you experienced difficulties exercising your right to vote in European and or local...
elections whilst living in another country?

- Yes
- No

2) Your views on facilitating participation in elections in the EU

Please indicate which of the following could in your opinion increase citizens' participation in European elections *(multiple replies possible)*

- More information on the European Parliament elections
- More information on the programmes and objectives of candidates and parties in the European Parliament
- More information on programmes and objectives of the lead candidates for the function of President of the European Commission ("Spitzenkandidaten")
- The relevance of EU policies for citizens' daily lives being better explained
- Voting being made more accessible in practice to all, including people with disabilities and older people
- Other

Please specify

1,500 character(s) maximum

Pre-elections campaign being made more accessible for people with disabilities, for instance deaf and hard of hearing people so to allow access to relevant information and political participation. Recognition of legal capacity for persons with psychosocial and intellectual disability.

Please indicate which of the following practices could make it easier in your view or citizens residing in another country to exercise their right to vote in European local elections there *(multiple replies possible)*

- Receiving individual letters explaining how to register and vote, possibly including the registration form
- Registration on the electoral roll automatically based on the person's registration as resident
- Possibility to cast vote using electronic/online tools
- Possibility to cast vote by post
- Accessibility of polling stations, in particular for people with reduced mobility (elderly, people with disabilities etc.)
- Other

Please specify
In many European jurisdictions, a person whose legal capacity is deprived or restricted is also deprived of the right to vote and to stand for election at European, national or municipal level. The elections to the European Parliament are largely inaccessible for persons with disabilities. The EC raises awareness of the equal right of persons with disabilities to vote and stand for elections at the European level. However, during the 2014 EU elections, the EU did not run any campaign or undertake any measures to ensure that citizens with disabilities were able to enjoy their right to vote and stand for elections. No initiatives at national level were promoted to ensure that persons under guardianship had the right to elect their representatives in the European Parliament.

Persons with disabilities urge the EU to include in its ongoing electoral law reform process the right of all European citizens with disabilities to vote and stand for EU and local elections on an equal basis with others. This includes the online voting tools, which should be made accessible following the worldwide acknowledge standard WCAG 2.0 from the W3C.

The EU should also promote accessible campaigns from political parties, including voting and materials, in all EU Member States at the next elections of the European Parliament.

Some EU countries offer the possibility for their nationals who reside abroad to cast their vote in national elections from their country of residence (e.g. by post, using electronic/online tools, in consulates etc.).

Do you think that such possibilities simplify or interfere with citizens living in another country?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate which of the following possibilities would make it easier in your view or citizens living in another country to vote in elections in their home country

- Possibility to cast their vote by post
- Possibility to cast their vote using electronic/online tools
- Possibility to cast their vote in consulates
- Other

Comments, if any

1,500 character(s) maximum
If accessible, online tools can facilitate voting for all citizens including persons with disabilities at lower costs. To do so, the developers of those tools should follow the standard WCAG 2.0 from the W3C.

I you had the opportunity to vote, means of electronic online tools would you have specific concerns about (multiple replies possible):

- potential fraud
- secrecy of the vote
- independence of the vote
- online/e-polling system not being accessible to all (e.g. persons with disabilities and older persons)
- Other

EU citizens who reside in another EU country have the right to stand as candidates in municipal elections there under the same conditions as apply to nationals of that country. However, Member States may restrict a number of posts in the executive bodies of the municipalities to their own nationals.

Do you consider that EU citizens living in another country should be able to run in local elections and to become members of the executive body of a municipality?

- Yes
- No

What source of information do you use to keep up to date on news and political broadcasting including on European elections? (multiple replies possible) Please include ranking from the reply you most agree with to being the one you least agree with:

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<th>Source of Information</th>
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Please specify
News and political broadcasting are sometimes not accessible across national borders.

Are you informed on news and political broadcasting by media/internet platforms in (multiple replies possible)

- your country of residence
- other EU countries
- Other

Are you satisfied with the information you receive?

- Yes
- Partially (e.g. cross-border coverage could be wider)
- No

Please specify

Would you like to be able to access more news programmes and political broadcasting across national orders on issues related to European democracy and elections?

- Yes
- No

Do you think that access to news and political broadcasting in information across orders would allow citizens to form clearer opinions on issues relevant to democracy in Europe?

- Yes
- No
3) Your views on EU common values

The European Union is founded on common values such as democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights including non-discrimination, inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity.

Do you think that more should be done to promote and raise awareness about these common values in our societies?

- Yes
- No

How could this be done? (multiple replies possible)

- Through school education (e.g. on EU citizenship and the values attached to it, including anti-discrimination and tolerance)
- Through university learning and research
- Through youth organisations and youth work
- Through targeted initiatives to generate debate amongst citizens on these issues
- Through life-long learning
- Through the mobility of young people (e.g. with Erasmus)
- Through debates within civil society and among citizens tackling the processes of stigmatisation, exclusion and discrimination
- Through transnational sport or other events
- Through cultural activities
- Through citizenship ceremonies for new citizens (a citizenship ceremony is an event which celebrates the gaining of citizenship of an EU country)
- Other

Comments, if any

Persons with disabilities have limited awareness of their rights and means to make their voice heard in the EU. They are discouraged to bring complaints to national or European Ombudsman. It is needed for persons with disabilities in Europe to see the development of a comprehensive and well-organised campaign on raising awareness on the CRPD and on fighting stigma and prejudice against persons with disabilities, particular that faced by women and girls with disabilities. We need a strategy for communication on the CRPD across all EU institutions, bodies and agencies. This strategy should cover all the EU’s mainstream communication channels, as mentioned above.

Do you think that local and regional authorities should play a more important role in promoting common values?
What tools could local and regional authorities use to promote common values?

1,500 character(s) maximum

European Structural Funds could be used to financially support civil society organisations in particular organisations of persons with disabilities. These actors play a key role in promoting human rights and social inclusion fostering integration and solidarity. However, youngsters with disabilities consider EU citizenship as an abstract concept. Many of them do not realise that disability rights, self-determination and citizenship are closely connected. More awareness and education should be oriented at this regard.

Do you think that the should do more to give citizens especially young people a stronger voice in democratic decision making through online consultation and dialogue mechanisms?

- Yes
- No

Comments, if any

1,500 character(s) maximum

Participation is a key principle of the UN CRPD. The Convention stresses that persons with disabilities need to be consulted and involved in all legislative and political initiatives that directly and indirectly concern them. Structural dialogue with persons with disabilities and their organisations will facilitate mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities in all EU policies and legislations.

Contact

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